

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 9 and 20-22 are pending in the present application. Claims 20-22 are amended and Claims 1, 3-7, 10-16, 18, 19, and 23 are canceled without prejudice by the present amendment.

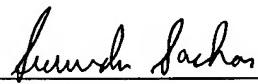
In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3-7, 10-15, 23, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Takahashi et al. (European Patent No. EP 0 700 215, herein “Takahashi”) in view of Sugiura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,621,497, herein “Sugiura”); Claims 16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Takahashi and Sugiura in view of Someya et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,392,656, herein “Someya”) and Stanton (U.S. Patent No. 5,428,408); Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Takahashi and Sugiura and in view of Zhang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,461,397, herein “Zhang”); Claim 9 was allowed; and Claims 20-22 were indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable matter. In light of this indication, Claims 20-22 have been rewritten in independent form including the features of their base claim and any intervening claim. In addition, Claims 20-22 have been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is believed that Claims 9 and 20-22 are in condition for formal allowance.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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